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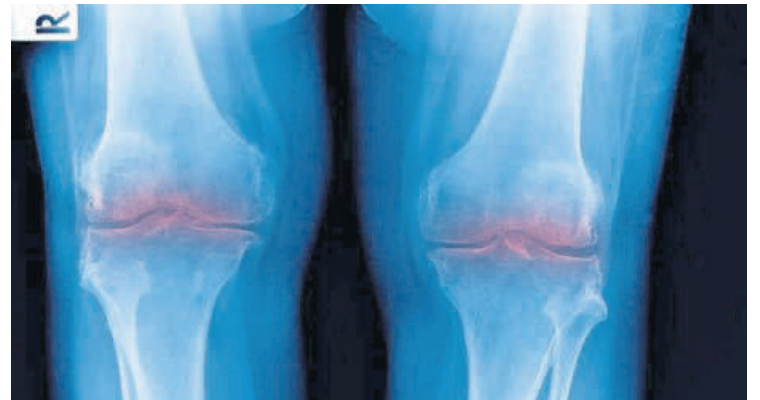
The end of the knee replacement? Scientists hail lab-grown cartilage breakthrough

WASHINGTON D.C. — In a development that could signal the beginning of the end for chronic joint pain, researchers funded by the federal Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) have successfully engineered functional, lab-grown cartilage. This breakthrough, announced Tuesday, offers a potential "holy grail" for the more than 32 million Americans currently

living with the debilitating effects of osteoarthritis. For decades, the medical community has struggled with a fundamental biological hurdle: human cartilage, the slippery tissue that cushions joints, does not heal itself. Unlike skin or bone, it lacks its own blood supply. Once it wears away due to age, injury, or disease, it is gone for good—leaving patients to endure bone-

on-bone friction that leads to agonizing pain and, eventually, invasive joint replacement surgery.

However, this new study suggests that the biological "dead end" of cartilage repair may finally have been bypassed. Utilizing a sophisticated blend of a patient's own stem cells and a bio-synthetic "scaffold," scientists have demonstrated



the ability to grow new, durable tissue that mimics the mechanical properties of natural cartilage.

The study, which was initially conducted in large animal models, showed that the lab-grown tissue integrated seamlessly with the surrounding bone. Within weeks, the subjects regained full range of motion. Most significantly, the engineered cartilage did not degrade under the stress of weight-bearing movement—a common failure point in previous experimental treatments. "We aren't just patching a hole; we are restoring the joint's original architecture," said one of the lead researchers during the unveiling in Washington. "This isn't a temporary filler. This is living tissue that grows and adapts with the patient. It represents a paradigm shift from managing pain to actually curing the underlying structural damage."

The implications for public health are staggering. Osteoarthritis is a leading cause of disability worldwide, costing the U.S. economy billions of dollars annually in lost productivity and healthcare expenses. Current solutions, such as cortisone shots or physical therapy, offer only temporary relief. Even total knee or hip replacements, while effective, are major surgeries with long recovery times and a finite lifespan of 15 to 20 years.

For younger patients or athletes who suffer joint injuries,

this breakthrough could mean returning to peak performance without the looming shadow of early-onset arthritis. For the elderly, it could mean maintaining independence and mobility well into their sunset years. The next step is the most critical: human clinical trials. ARPA-H officials confirmed today that they are fast-tracking the regulatory process to begin testing in human volunteers within the next eighteen months. If these trials mirror the success seen in the laboratory, the procedure could be widely available at specialized orthopedic centers by the end of the decade.

While the researchers cautioned that widespread availability is still several years away, the mood at the announcement was one of cautious triumph. The technology behind the "scaffold"—a 3D-printed lattice that eventually dissolves once the new cartilage takes hold—is being hailed as a masterpiece of bio-engineering.

As the global population ages, the demand for joint-related care is expected to skyrocket. This American-led breakthrough offers a vision of a future where "getting older" no longer automatically means "slowing down." For millions of people currently dreading their next staircase or morning walk, the news from Washington is more than just a scientific update—it is a promise of a life reclaimed from pain. □

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Elon University's 'Kindness Cab' drives wave of altruism across campus

ELON, N.C. — Beneath the budding oaks of Elon University's historic campus, a silver golf cart decorated with bright streamers and hand-painted signs pulled up to a group of students rushing toward Haggett Hall. This isn't a standard campus shuttle; it is the "Kindness Cab," the flagship symbol of the university's annual "Pay It Forward" (PIF) Week, which officially hit its stride this Tuesday.

The initiative, now a cornerstone of the spring semester, aims to transform the campus into a living laboratory of altruism. While college life is often defined by the stress of midterms and the scramble for internships, PIF Week challenges students, faculty, and staff to pause and prioritize the well-being of others through intentional, selfless actions.

"It changes the vibration of the entire campus," said Sarah Miller, a senior volunteer coordinating the week's logistics. "You see someone get a free ride to class or a stranger buy them a coffee, and suddenly the academic pressure doesn't feel so heavy. It reminds us that we are part of a community that actually cares."

The Kindness Cab is more than just a novelty. Operated by university staff volunteers, the cart traverses the brick pathways offering free rides to anyone in need. But there is a catch: the "fare" for the ride is a promise to perform a good deed for someone else before the day is over. Passengers are handed "Kindness Cards"—small, colorful slips of paper that they are encouraged to pass along once they've completed their own act of service.

The ripple effect was visible across campus by Tuesday afternoon. In the Moseley Center, a "gratitude station" was overflowing with handwritten notes. Students waited in line to write letters of appreciation to dining hall workers, janitorial staff, and professors who had made a difference in their lives. By 2:00 p.m., over 400 notes had

been pinned to the central display board, ranging from simple "thank yous" to deeply personal stories of mentorship.

The spirit of the week has also extended into the surrounding community. Local businesses in downtown Elon have joined the movement, with several coffee shops reporting a surge in "suspended coffees"—a practice where a customer pays for an extra drink for a student who might be struggling financially or simply having a hard day.

"We often talk about 'The Elon Learning Requirement,' but this is the 'Humanity Requirement,'" noted Dr. James Arrington, a sociology professor who incorporated a kindness reflection into his morning lecture. "Research shows that performing an act of kindness releases oxytocin in both the giver and the receiver. When an entire campus does it simultaneously, you create a psychological safety net that is incredibly powerful."

As the sun began to set over Under the Oaks, the central gathering space on campus, the energy remained high. Student organizations hosted a "Unity Social," where icebreaker games were designed to connect students from different social circles who might otherwise never speak.

Organizers emphasize that while the week features organized events, the true magic lies in the unscripted moments: a student holding a heavy door for a stranger, a peer offering tutoring for free, or a faculty member leaving encouraging sticky notes on library carrels.

As PIF Week continues through Friday, the goal remains clear: to ensure that the spirit of generosity doesn't end when the banners come down. For the students at Elon, the Kindness Cab may stop running at the end of the week, but the momentum of a thousand small favors is expected to carry them through the final exams and beyond. □



Elon University recently achieved a number of top rankings in The Princeton Review's annual Best Colleges and now has been named among "The Most Beautiful College Campuses in the South."

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How one small Indiana town is designing the future of American community

COLUMBUS, INDIANA — In the heart of the American Midwest, a small city is proving that world-class architecture isn't just for global metropolises. While many rural communities struggle with dwindling populations and decaying downtowns, Columbus, Indiana, is witnessing a profound rebirth. Through the pioneering work of CivicLab and a renewed commitment to "intentional design," this town of 50,000 is showing the nation how physical surroundings can fundamentally mend the social fabric of a community.

The story of Columbus has always been intertwined with its skyline. Known for decades as the "Athens of the Prairie," the city boasts over 90 buildings designed by modern masters like I.M. Pei, Eero Saarinen, and Richard Meier. However, the true miracle of Columbus isn't just the steel and glass; it is the "Columbus Way"—a unique collaborative philosophy that brings together the public sector, private business, and local philanthropy to solve community problems.

This week, leaders from CivicLab, a local nonprofit institute, presented a transformative vision for the city's



B is for Brutalism at Southside Elementary School, designed by Eliot Noyes in 1969.
Photographer: Iwan Baan

future. Their message was clear: civic design is not about aesthetics alone; it is a tool for human connection. In an era of increasing digital isolation, the physical spaces where we gather parks, libraries, and plazas have become the front lines of democracy.

"We don't just build buildings here," noted one local organizer during the presentation. "We build the containers for our collective life. When a space is designed with dignity and beauty, it tells the citizens that they are valued. That

realization changes how people treat one another." The recent revitalization efforts have focused on "activating" the gaps between the famous landmarks. New pedestrian-friendly corridors now link the historic Cummins Inc. headquarters with the community's vibrant 1892-era courthouse. These spaces are more than just sidewalks; they are designed as "social friction" points places where neighbors are forced to slow down, look up from their phones, and engage in the lost art of the chance encounter.

The impact of this design-forward thinking is measurable. While many Midwestern towns have seen their youth flee for the coasts, Columbus has maintained a steady growth. Young professionals and families are drawn to a city that feels both historic and cutting-edge. The local economy has followed suit, with small businesses reporting increased foot traffic and a renewed sense of pride among shop owners.

But perhaps the most inspirational aspect of the Columbus model is its inclusiv-

ity. The "Civic Design" initiative has worked tirelessly to ensure that the beauty of the city is accessible to everyone, regardless of neighborhood or income. This includes the renovation of public parks in underserved areas and the creation of "living rooms"—public indoor spaces where residents can gather during the humid Indiana summers or biting winters.

The success of Columbus serves as a powerful rebuttal to the idea that small-town decline is inevitable. It suggests that by investing in the "public realm," cities can foster a sense of belonging that serves as an antidote to modern cynicism.

As the sun sets over the iconic North Christian Church spire, the streets of Columbus hum with a quiet, purposeful energy. It is a reminder that when a community chooses to invest in its own beauty and functionality, it isn't just improving its property values it is strengthening its soul. For other small towns looking for a roadmap to the future, the lesson from Indiana is simple: design your city for people, and the people will make the city thrive. □

'Charlie's Angels' stars reunite for show's 50th anniversary

Los Angeles, United States

The stars of legendary American crime drama "Charlie's Angels" reunited Monday at Los Angeles' PaleyFest to celebrate 50 years since the show catapulted the trio to fame. Aired over five seasons between 1976 and 1981, the show became a cultural phenomenon that left its mark on television and starred Kate Jackson, Jaclyn Smith and Cheryl Ladd who joined after Farrah Fawcett left the show to pursue a movie career.

The series followed three powerful women who left the daily grind of the Los Angeles police force to

become private detectives working for a mysterious boss named Charlie Townsend who spoke to

them through an intercom. It hoped to highlight the strength of women and



(L-R) U.S. actress Kate Jackson, U.S. actress Jaclyn Smith and US actress and singer Cheryl Ladd attend "Charlie's Angels" 50th Anniversary Celebration at PaleyFest LA 2026 at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood, California, on April 6, 2026.

fight against the archetype that women needed rescuing, Smith who played Kelly Garrett told AFP on the red carpet at Hollywood's legendary Dolby Theatre.

"Women came into their own, it was groundbreaking (and a) game changer for women," she said. "Here we were chasing danger (and) we were not being rescued. We were not a wife, a nurse, a secretary, a girlfriend... we were these strong women that could take down a 200-pound man."

Jackson, 77, said she had "never doubted" the show's potential or that it

would become a hit big enough to captivate audiences half a century later. "It was unique, it was unusual, and the three of us had chemistry... we're still sisters today," the 77-year-old who played Sabrina Duncan told AFP.

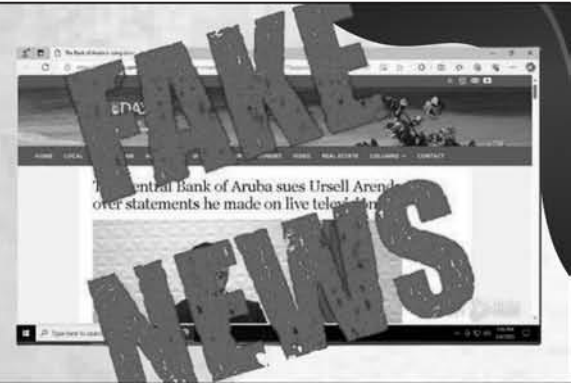
Although the cast of "Charlie's Angels" changed several times, Smith, Jackson and Ladd formed the series' most enduring trio with Fawcett, who died in 2009, returning as a guest star in a few episodes as Ladd's older sister.

PaleyFest, organized by the Paley Center for Media, celebrates the best of American television. □

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German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (L) and her wife Elke Budenbender stand in front of Picasso's masterpiece 'Guernica' at the Reina Sofia museum in Madrid on November 26, 2025, on the first day of his visit to Spain.

Picasso's 'Guernica' at heart of battle in Spain over location

Madrid, Spain

Pablo Picasso's anti-war masterpiece "Guernica" is swept up in a conflict in Spain, where Basque leaders want the government in Madrid to move the painting to their region, whose 1937 bombing inspired it.

The mural-sized painting has been on display since 1992 at the Reina Sofia museum in the Spanish capital, and repeated requests for it to be moved to Spain's Basque Country have been refused.

The latest demand was made by the head of the regional Basque government, Imanol Pradales, during talks with Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

The Basque government wants the painting to be hung in the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the April 26, 1937 bombing, in which forces from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy razed the town of Guernica to help Gen-

eral Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

Bringing the painting to Bilbao from October until June would be a form of "reparation and historical memory", the Basque government said.

Sanchez -- whose minority government depends on the support of two Basque parties in parliament to pass laws -- did not reject the proposal outright, instead referring it to the culture ministry.

The ministry asked the Reina Sofia museum for a technical report on the viability of the request, which once again "strongly advised" against moving the painting.

The report said the painting is too fragile to travel, citing risks of damage from vibration or movement.

Picasso's black-and-white masterpiece is the highlight of the Reina Sofia museum, which welcomed around 1.6 million visitors last year.

The outspoken head of the regional government of Madrid, Isabel Diaz Ayuso of the conservative Popular Party (PP), weighed in on Monday, calling the request to move the painting "provincial".

"It makes no sense for everything to be returned to its origin. In that case we should send all of Picasso's works to Malaga," she said, a reference to the southern Spanish city where Picasso was born.

- Return from New York -

Asked about the controversy on Tuesday, Spain's central government spokeswoman Elma Saiz said the government relies on the advice of "professionals", referring to the museum report, and "never resorts to insults".

Painted in 1937 in the aftermath of the bombing, "Guernica" debuted in Paris at the World's Fair, then was placed in the care of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. □



Devotees carry a large phallus-shaped portable shrine through the streets of Kawasaki during the Kanamara festival on April 5, 2026.

Revellers parade giant penises to dash stigma in Japan's fertility festival

Kawasaki, Japan

Showcasing phallus-shaped portable shrines and pink penis candies, Japan's annual fertility festival teemed Sunday with tourists, couples and families elated by its open display of sex.

The spring "Kanamara" celebration near Tokyo features colourfully dressed worshippers carrying a trio of giant phallic shaped objects as they parade through the street with glee.

The festival as legend has it honours a local blacksmith in the Edo Period (1603-1868) who forged an iron dildo to break the teeth of a sharp-toothed demon inhabiting a woman's vagina that had been castrating young men on their wedding nights.

Today a three-foot (one-metre) black steel phallus sits in the courtyard of the Kanayama Shrine honouring the Shinto deities of fertility, childbirth and protection from sexually transmitted infections.

Over the centuries, sex workers pilgrimaged to the shrine to seek its powers of protection before the festival evolved into a broader fertility rite seeking to destigmatise sex.

"I hope the festival can help disabuse people of the notion that sex is a bad, dirty thing," Hiroyuki Nakamura, chief priest at a shrine that hosts the festival, told AFP.

In February, preliminary data released by the health ministry showed that Japan's birth rate had fallen for the 10th straight year in 2025.

A total of 705,809 babies were born that year in Japan down 2.1 percent from 2024.

The data includes births to Japanese nationals in Japan, foreign births in Japan and babies born to Japanese nationals overseas. □

Slow boat to Ilulissat: long nights on Greenland's last ferry

Nuuk, Denmark

It's Friday night and the port in Nuuk is a hive of activity. Passengers loaded down with heavy bags hurry aboard a rusty red and white ship Greenland's last ferry.

Among them are an ethnologist and a few Danish tourists, but most are Greenlanders from the 74 villages and settlements that dot the west coast, a thin strip of land squeezed between the ice sheet and the open sea just south of the Arctic Ocean.

Linking Qaqortoq in the south to Ilulissat almost 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) north, the ferry was for a long time the only means of transport in Greenland, until air travel took over.

With its old-fashioned charm and pervasive smell of linoleum, the vessel feels stuck in 1992, the year it was built.

The engine rumbled, and a last kiss was blown toward the quay. On deck, a passenger watched as Nuuk faded into the distance, just a glimmer under the northern lights.

Welcome aboard the Sarfaq Ittuk.

- Rural exodus -

The ship's crew swiftly got down to work, the cook battling heavy seas to line



A man looks out at the frozen sea from the aft deck of the Sarfaq Ittuk ferry in Disko Bay, not far from Ilulissat, Greenland, on March 15, 2026.

up colourful hors d'oeuvres. Passengers shuffled cards and rolled dice, laughter rising up around the formica tables in the cafe, the ferry's social hub.

"We know each other. We're talking about family, friends, weddings," said Karen Rasmussen, 60.

The ferry offers villagers a chance to reconnect with those who left for the capital Nuuk during the rural exodus of the 1980s.

Karen looked out the porthole, her gaze absent. "I'm on morphine," she said, gingerly holding her broken arm to her chest.

Next to her, 56-year-old Arne Steenholdt was just diagnosed with cancer "around here", he said, pointing to his stomach.

Both residents of remote communities, they were returning home from hospital in Nuuk, the only facility offering advanced care.

In the evening, Steenholdt retired to his bunk, pulling the curtain to block out the light. Karen wasn't able to sleep a wink.

- Climate warming -

The ferry crossed the Arctic Circle on Saturday. As waves crashed against

the hull, a deckhand swept away the ice building up on deck. "You gotta take care of the old lady," he shouted, referring to the ferry.

Normally ships only resume sailing at these latitudes in late April, when the coast is free from the pack ice that drifts in from neighbouring Canada.

But in this exceptionally mild year, the Sarfaq Ittuk resumed its route in mid-February because the ice was "very late" and formed only a thin layer, Captain Jens Peter Berthelsen said.

Greenland's west coast registered its warmest January on record, with temperatures up to 11C warmer than usual, according to the Danish Meteorological Institute.

Berthelsen kept his eyes fixed on the horizon. "The challenge is to detect the underwater icebergs."

Global warming has made it more difficult to predict when the pack ice will return.

"Ten or 15 years ago it was in September, and now it's only late December or January," he said.

- Rise of air travel -

Mass was held in Greenlandic in the cafe on Sunday, glassware rattling from the ferry's vibrations. As it approached Ilulissat, it steered through the thin pack ice scraping against the hull.

In the bay, the ice rippling in the ship's wake had something magical about it, but not for Ludvig Larsen. He was bored.

"The helicopter was cancelled, so I had to take the boat," said the 60-year-old referee headed to Ilulissat for a football tournament.

In recent years, he's started flying instead of taking the ferry, enabling him to reach Greenland's "iceberg capital" in just 25 minutes.

Now he was spending the day at sea. □

Ostrich on a side quest: runaway big bird sprints on Thai highway

Bangkok, Thailand

A pet ostrich went for a speedy jaunt down a busy Thai highway on Tuesday,

before being returned safe and sound to its enclosure at an animal-themed cafe.



This frame grab from a handout video courtesy of Chairat Sompong taken and released on April 7, 2026 shows an ostrich running along a highway in Thailand's Chonburi province.

The six-month-old male ostrich raced along a three-lane highway in Thailand's coastal Chonburi province as cars and trucks sped by the flightless bird, according to a video posted by a man who was driving directly behind it.

"Who lost an ostrich on the road? Come get him. He runs so fast," the motorist, Chairat Sompong, is heard saying in the video.

Chairat, 33, later told AFP that he was driving home when he came upon a traffic jam.

"At first, I thought it was an accident but when I drove close, I saw an ostrich running in the middle lane," he said.

The ostrich "looked afraid and panicked", Chairat said, adding that he tried to make it move to the left lane, where it eventually stopped running.

Adult ostriches are the fastest running birds, with top recorded speeds of around 70 kilometres (43 miles) per hour.

The ostrich, named B1, was finally corralled around 15 kilometres (nine miles) from its pen in resort town Pattaya, said the animal's owner, Itsara Boriboon.

"I was mortified and worried," Itsara, 43, told AFP. "I was concerned he might have had an accident." He said he had bought

B1 and a female ostrich called B2 five months ago for 15,000 baht (\$460) and neither had fled their enclosure before.

Itsara, who owns a cat cafe that also features the pair of ostriches, said his employees told him B1 had escaped after noise from a truck delivering construction materials frightened off the big bird.

The man who later caught B1 contacted Itsara, who drove to a neighbouring province to pick up his pet.

"I will have to take care of them very well from now on so that this kind of incident will not happen again," he said. □



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A week of Laughter, Compassion, and Community: One Love Foundation Inc. Raises Over \$27,000 for Aruba's Animals

ORANJESTAD —It was a memorable week earlier last month for animal lovers across Aruba. On March 6 and 7, One Love Foundation, Inc. hosted a series of sold-out fundraising events, bringing together locals and visitors to support animal welfare, raising over \$27,000.

The week kicked off with a truly special evening. Renowned spirit medium Tiffany Rice hosted an exclusive Gallery Reading on Friday, March 6, 2026, setting the tone for a meaningful week of compassion and giving back. Her powerful and heartfelt event united the community while helping launch a remarkable two-night fundraising effort.

As an official partner Spirit Medium Tiffany Rice also hosts exclusive gallery readings for One Love Foundation, Inc. in both Aruba and the U.S., helping raise thousands for the island's furry friends.

The momentum continued the following evening with another sold-out event: the 2nd Annual Paws-itively Hilarious Stand-Up Comedy Benefit on Saturday, March 7, 2026. Hosted by the one and only Ray Ellin at Eagle Aruba Resort, the night delivered exactly what it promised—an unforgettable evening where comedy met compassion.

The entertainment was nothing short of spectacular. A special shoutout



to an incredible lineup of comedians who kept the laughs going all night—headlined by the immensely talented Ray Ellin, whose signature humor and energy lit up the stage. He was joined by the equally hilarious Kermet Apio, Tony V, and Carolyn Plummer, each delivering standout performances that had the audience laughing from start to finish.

As a member of One Love Foundation, Inc.'s Fundraising Board, Ray also plays a key role in organizing comedy events in Aruba and New York. Combined with Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort's generous dollar-for-dollar match, these efforts have helped raise over \$134,000 to support animal welfare on the island. Aruba Ray's Comedy has been TripAdvisor's Number One Show and Number One Nightlife Activity for the past twelve years.

Together, these back-to-back events created an extraordinary week of giving. Every dollar raised will go directly toward animal welfare, helping prevent the suffering of countless animals across the island.

The success of the week is a powerful reminder of what can happen when a community unites for a common cause. Because of the generosity, laughter, and kindness of everyone involved, thousands of animals will benefit from these lifesaving efforts.

Looking ahead, the momentum continues. Mark your calendars for the 1st Annual PAW FEST on April 18, 2026, in partnership with Stimami Sterilisami, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, and The Village Mall at Palm Beach.

About One Love Foundation Inc.
One Love Foundation, Inc. is a U.S.-based, all-volunteer non profit orga-

nization registered in both the United States and Aruba. Since its founding in 2020, the foundation has made meaningful strides in improving the lives of Aruba's animals, including:

- Partnering with Stimami Sterilisami and Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort to expand island-wide sterilization efforts.
- Providing critical supplies to local animal organizations.
- Funding urgent veterinary care for injured and vulnerable animals.

Through compassion, collaboration, and community support, One Love Foundation, Inc. continues to create lasting change for Aruba's stray and neglected animals. □

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Birds of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foundation publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the fol-



lowing pictures and descriptions from the foundations Facebook page.

The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful things start happening in nature.



Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know

exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.

Cabochoon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory. English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male) Dutch: Blauwstaarts-maragdkolibrie (mannetje).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect. □



Aruba: The island of Aloes



ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera con-

tain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

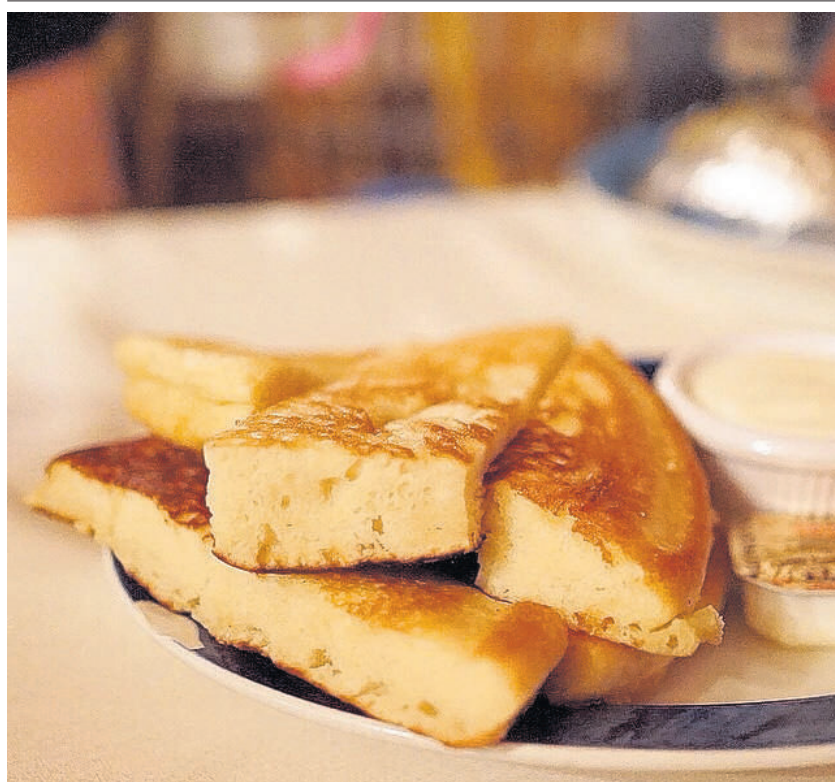


However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.

The impact and relevance



Dining in? Try making some local favorites! How to make "pan bati"

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal
2 tbsp baking powder
1 1/3 cup of milk
1 pinch of salt
2 tbsp of granulated sugar
Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl

first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moisture is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! □



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Radisson Blu celebrated 5 years of Blu Hospitality in Aruba



Aruba Today sends warm congratulations to Radisson Blu, which recently celebrated 5 wonderful years of operations. Radisson Blu marked the occasion with a wonderful party for guests and local partners.

During the celebration, guests could enjoy refreshing and elegant cider from Blu Tap Cider, the Caribbean's first dedicated cider bar.

Blu Tap Cider features a rotating selection of handcrafted apple-based ciders developed in collaboration with South Hill Cider, a small, founder-led cidery based in New York's Finger Lakes region. Produced in limited quantities and shaped by each harvest, the ciders reflect the character of the apples available each season rather

than a fixed, mass-produced lineup.

Guests also enjoyed mouth-watering food from Don Esteban Gourmet, which bridges the gap between the Spanish sierras and the beaches of Aruba; 100% Spanish, straight from the source!

The evening celebrated five years of hard work, but also great success and passion from a team dedicated to excellence to the last detail.

Built by a fully local team, supported by their guests and shaped by the community around them, Blu is just getting started.

Congratulations! □



Aruba to me

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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Episode CCCXLVII (347)

Dust, Discovery, and the Song of the Dori

In this episode, Etnia Nativa shares a historic scientific journey across Aruba.

It all happened in the opening days of 1885, our island found itself briefly transformed into a stage for scientific curiosity and cultural exchange. Among its visitors was the distinguished German professor, Dr. K. Martin of Leyden University, a man whose passions stretched from the rugged language of geology to the delicate beauty of moths and butterflies. He was not alone; a small academic party accompanied him, including students Van der Pol, De Haan, and Molengraaff, as well as Professor Dr. Suringa.

What began as a journey for agro-geological research would leave a far more lasting imprint than expected. Beyond scientific observations and fieldwork, the expedition produced a written account of enduring cultural and historical value—one that captured not only the land, but the lived experience of traversing it. Among the lessons learned, one stood out with almost humorous gravity: a firm warning never to travel without a hammock. It was a simple yet telling piece of advice, hinting at the challenges of a landscape both beautiful and unforgiving.

The group later set out for Jamanota, where they were astonished to find a small puddle of fresh water nestled in exposed slate. Their guide scooped tadpoles from it—an unexpected sight in Aruba's dry season.

The encounter led to a fascinating revelation. While the locals spoke of the dori, a frog believed to disappear deep into the earth during drought—sometimes at depths of several meters—the expedition instead found a fully grown specimen said to be of a mako, a different kind. This suggested that Aruba was home to two species of amphibians a frogs and a toad, a striking contrast to neighboring islands like Curaçao and Bonaire, where frogs were not found at all.

The dori itself held deep cultural significance. See our Episode 281, 'Dori, the Native Froggy,' for details. Appearing in great numbers at the start of the rainy season, it was seen by inhabitants as a symbol of relief and fertility—a harbinger of life after long periods of drought and hardship. Its importance stretched back centuries; frog figures were carved into the artifacts of the island's ancient inhabitants. Even in Martin's time, people still sang simple, songs in its honor, preserving a tradition that spoke to both survival and reverence for nature.

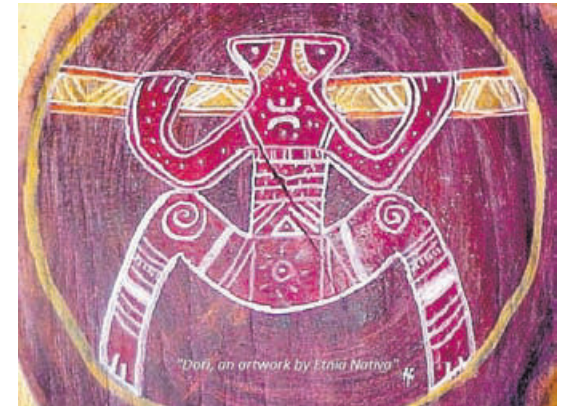
Martin recorded a haunting fragment of local folklore, sung softly by an elderly woman:

"Dori, dori mako, si mi muri... ken ta dera?"

Dori, dori mako... if I die, who will bury me?

The haunting simplicity of this traditional verse reflects the deep cultural resonance of the frog in Aruba's past. Yet, as later clarified, the song likely refers not to the small dori, but to the larger "sapo," or cane toad—another ever-present nighttime croaker whose calls accompany the promise of rain and harvest abundance.

Professor Martin's journey across the island captures both the harshness and wonder of Aruba's terrain. He describes how his party pressed forward "through the dense undergrowth of spiny trees and cacti," enduring scratches, torn clothing, and exhaust-



ing detours across dry streambeds as they navigated the rugged north coast.

Their travels brought them to Miralamar, a site once rich with gold-bearing quartz and the remains of a now-abandoned English mining venture. A day later, fatigue had set in; even the donkeys refused to move. Forced to remain near Fontein, their guide could only reassure them with the words, "poco, poco"—slowly, slowly.

The following morning offered new discoveries. A short distance from Fontein, the group explored a stalactite cave, which Martin believed had once sheltered the island's early inhabitants. Though now occupied only by bats and rats, the caves still bore traces of indigenous life in the form of drawings etched into their walls.

Continuing along the coast, the expedition reached Daimari, a remote settlement that, at the time, consisted of a single modest dwelling by the bay. The house, sparsely furnished with hammocks, a crude table, and fragile chairs, reflected the simplicity of island life. Outside stood a small cooking shelter, open to the breeze, and—surprisingly—two markers of ingenuity: a simple sundial and a wind gauge fashioned from calabashes.

Here, Martin met a man of mixed heritage whose life reflected both fortune and loss, having earned and squandered twenty-four thousand guilders. Such fragments form a vivid portrait of nineteenth-century Aruba—a place where endurance and resilience shaped life, and where even the smallest creatures, like the rain-calling frogs, carried the weight of hope. □

Don't just visit Aruba—understand it.
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Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.

Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the Arikok Na-



tional Park. Recognizable sites within this area include the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some

speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is

much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as "Shon" by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas. □

Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.

Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and

appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Sil-

vester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church

of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki

Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □



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By THOMAS JOSEPH

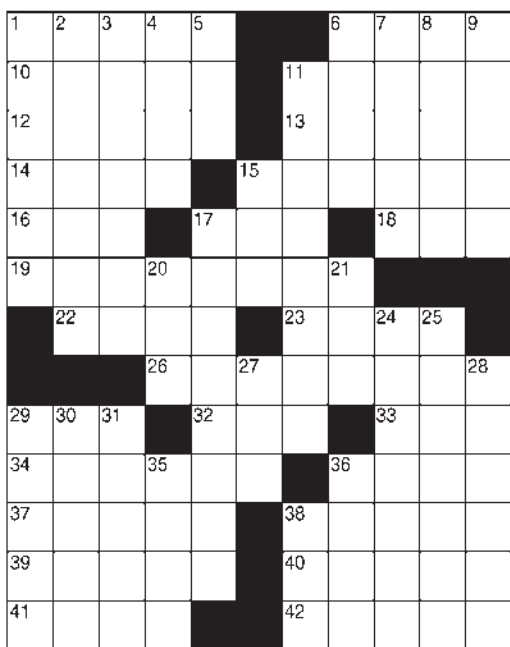
ACROSS

- 1 Lowly females
workers
6 Fortitude material
10 Dance parties
11 Ecru
12 Put up lawyer's
13 Trig topic major
14 Brown songbird
15 Big snake
16 Do something
17 Treasury Dept. div.
18 Gift from Santa
19 Knick-knack shelves
22 Way out
23 Mystique
26 Some online helpers
29 Frilly wrap
32 Ram's mate
33 Porch sight
34 Square
36 Ring of light
37 Clean with effort
38 Talk at length
39 Indian dish
40 Get up

DOWN

- 41 Farm
42 Pane material
1 Would-be lawyer's major
2 Otologist's case
3 Strain
4 Bottle part
5 Fast plane
6 Polite fellow
7 Proper
8 Dome-shaped home
9 Minute tool
11 Massa-chusetts
15 Old hand
17 On paper
20 Quirk
21 Deli order
24 Hungary neighbor
25 Be-wildered
27 Cobbling
28 Go pieces
29 Name on the Cardinals' stadium
30 Promptly
31 Squirrel's find
35 For us
36 Fling
38 Scandal sheet

FASTS CAROL
ADHOC ELENA
DEATH VALLEY
ELMTIS ALE
DESTINE TAR
ACE RENE
BRINK MUSED
LENS WAD
OFT TIMELAG
GEE ISM ORE
GRAND CANYON
EERIE LEASE
RESTS SOLES



4-19

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-19 CRYPTOQUOTE

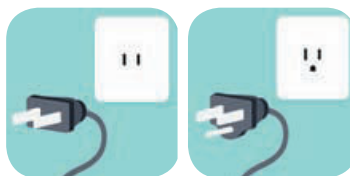
PQIJP KG PMTP TJ L LFCBQG
TNN NTA PB MGNH PMG JNTZG,
JB ALNN L LFCBQG LP TNN PB
HQBGRP TC GCJNTZGX ABKTC.

— JIJTC V. TCPMBCW
Cryptoquote: THERE ARE YEARS
THAT ASK QUESTIONS AND YEARS THAT
ANSWER. — ZORA NEALE HURSTON

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the

Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
07 TUE	OASIS OF THE SEA Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
08 WED	REGAL PRINCESS Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: B SERENADE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: I FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: **** Berth: E
09 THU	OCEANIA INSIGNIA Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 20:00 Berth: B CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 20:00 Berth: C GRAND PRINCESS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: I
10 FRI	NORWEGIAN JEWEL Arrival: 11:00 Departure: 20:00 Berth: C
12 SUN	FREEWINDS [Departure] Arrival: **** Departure: 22:30 Berth: E

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

2	5	4					6	1
3		1		2				8
		7				2		
1			9	8			4	
5	7	9	1		4		2	
8		6			7			9
		8	5			7	3	6
	1			7			8	2
								5

Difficulty: ★★★

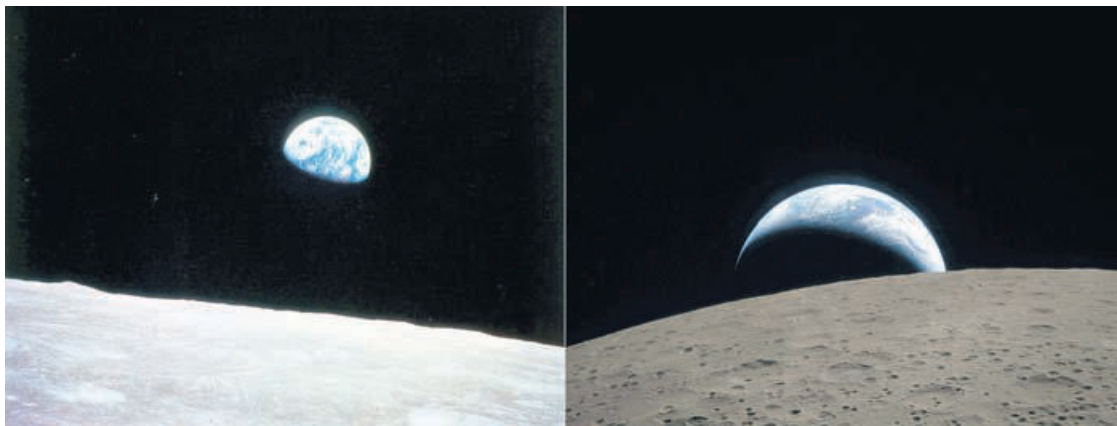
4/8

Answer to previous puzzle

3	9	1	7	2	8	5	6	4
5	4	2	6	1	9	8	3	7
8	7	6	3	5	4	2	9	1
9	6	7	8	3	2	1	4	5
4	1	3	9	7	5	6	8	2
2	8	5	1	4	6	9	7	3
1	2	8	4	9	7	3	5	6
7	5	9	2	6	3	4	1	8
6	3	4	5	8	1	7	2	9

Difficulty: ★★

4/7



This combination of pictures created on April 07, 2026 shows (L/R) a NASA handout image showing Earthrise over the Moon made on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1968 from Apollo 8, the first manned mission to the moon, as it entered lunar orbit and a NASA handout image showing Earth as it dips beyond the lunar horizon, also known as "Earthset," as seen from the Orion spacecraft on April 6, 2026.

Artemis II crew basks in glow of lunar flyby en route to Earth

Houston, United States

The Artemis II astronauts were jetting towards Earth and sharing their lunar fly-by souvenirs Tuesday, delighting colleagues both at home and in space with tales of their historic journey.

Of note was their stunning shot of an Earthset, the moment when Earth drops below the rugged lunar horizon. The image was a deliberate nod to the iconic Earthrise image taken by an Apollo 8 astronaut in 1968, a shot that helped capture the public's imagination during the first space mission to carry humans around the Moon. The modern version released by NASA pairs the delicate, watery planet Earth with the harsh curve of the Moon, separated by black space.

"First photo from the far side of the Moon," the White House said, reposting the image.

The astronauts were busy Tuesday afternoon debriefing lunar scientists in Houston's mission control about what they had witnessed during their nearly seven-hour lunar observation period.

"Our whole Lunar Science team and the broader science community have been pouring out positive feedback and gratitude, so know that what you did yesterday really made a difference scientifically," said Kelsey Young, lead scientist for the Artemis II mission.

The crew of four U.S. astronauts Reid Wiseman, Christina Koch, and Victor Glover, teamed with Canadian

Jeremy Hansen went on the mission to loop around Earth's natural satellite as part of a broader program paving the way for a Moon landing in 2028.

After completing their lunar flyby in which they also broke the record for distance from Earth they were bound for home, with splashdown due in the Pacific off the California coast late Friday. □



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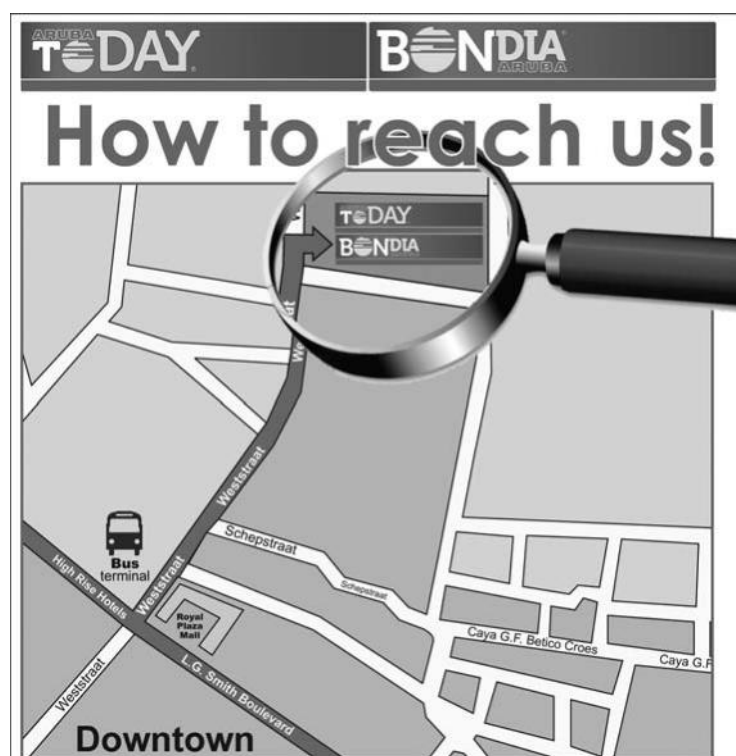
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



AI-generated artists breakthrough in country music

New York, United States

AI-generated singers routinely rank among the top-streamed country music artists in the United States a trend that for now is limited to a genre that industry observers fear is becoming too formulaic.

Breaking Rust, Cain Walker, Aventhis, and Outlaw Gospel have more in common than cowboy hats, denim and leather. They are all completely computer-generated, from their faces to their melodies.

And they are all hitmakers. "That's a phenomenon I didn't see coming," said Jennie Hayes Kurtz of the country music band Brother and The Hayes.

"I thought AI was going to be curing cancer or something."

Many of the AI country tunes tap into the genre's archetype of the lone cowboy: a rugged, taciturn, plain-spoken man who, above all, refuses to apologize for simply existing.

Lyrics are delivered in raspy, gravelly voices that sound as authentic as the real thing. "It's scary as songwriters," said Kassie Jordan, who forms the singing duo Blue Honey with her husband Troy Brooks.

"We are starting to see a lot of people just putting words



This photo illustration shows a screen picture of Whiskey & Water, featuring Cain Walker (L) and Cade Winslow (R), in New York on April 3, 2026.

into these chatbots and it is writing songs for them," she said. "As a songwriter, it's kind of like, is anyone going to even think I really wrote this?"

Berklee College of Music professor Joe Bennett noted that a sampling of AI singers suggests that the words used to "prompt" AI songs were "not particularly detailed." None of the producers behind AI-generated music projects responded to AFP's requests for comment.

So how did AI find a place in a genre that is fundamentally rooted in the human experience and storytelling, blending folk, blues, and

even gospel influences?

For Bennett, the emergence of modern country music in the early 2000s with a highly polished, more pop sound and repeated "melodic shapes" is key.

AI models could become adept at replicating such a sound, when fueled with those elements, he explained.

- 'Superficial' -

Once overshadowed by rap and Latin music, and hindered by the industry's shift to digital music formats, country music has nevertheless staged a comeback thanks to a generation of

artists with stronger pop, not folk, sensibilities.

Following in the footsteps of country-turned-pop megastar Taylor Swift, today's headliners are more likely to sport baseball caps than wide Stetsons.

Their music breaks genre boundaries, while artists such as Beyonce and Post Malone win fans and sell albums with their crossover efforts. Last year, country stars Morgan Wallen and Zach Bryan were both in the top 10 most streamed artists on Spotify. Some in the industry believe country's rebirth signifies a dulled-down formula designed to appeal to the

widest possible audience. "The lyrics aren't as deep as they used to be," Jordan said.

"A big portion of popular country music has become kind of shallow, so that is pretty easy to duplicate." Bennett says the industry must do a better job of identifying AI-generated music, noting that Deezer is the only major streaming platform to clearly label such material. "We need AI detection," Bennett maintained.

"It will happen, and there is a consumer demand for it." Hayes Kurtz said there is a large audience of "passive" listeners who don't care whether music is made by AI, but there are also "active listeners" who attend concerts, buy band merchandise, and deeply respect the integrity of the artists.

"That audience seems to really care if the music is made by the actual humans they are going to see," Hayes Kurtz said.

Jordan says she remains optimistic about the future.

"There's another wave of country artists that are coming that is really into doing it the old school way and showing emotion," she said. "That will be harder for AI to duplicate. That might save the genre." □

Latest Anthropic AI model finds cracks in software defenses

New York, United States

Anthropic on Tuesday said its yet-to-be-released artificial intelligence model called Claude Mythos has proven keenly adept at exposing software weaknesses.

Mythos has laid bare thousands of vulnerabilities in commonly used applications for which no patch or fix exists, prompting the San Francisco-based AI startup to form an alliance with cybersecurity specialists to bolster defenses against hacking.

"The capabilities of the most advanced AI models are expected to advance substantially in the coming months," Anthropic said.

"For cybersecurity to stay

ahead of this curve, we must act now."

Leaps in AI model capabilities have come with concerns about hackers using such tools for figuring out passwords or cracking

encryption meant to keep data safe.

The oldest of the vulnerabilities uncovered by Mythos dates back 27 years, and none were ostensibly noticed by their makers before being pinpointed by

the AI model, according to Anthropic.

Mythos is the latest generation of Anthropic's Claude family of AI, and a recent leak of some of its code prompted the startup to release a blog post warning it posed unprecedented cybersecurity risks.

"The vulnerabilities it finds are often subtle and difficult to detect," Anthropic said during a briefing on Tuesday. As an example, it said Mythos found a previously unnoticed flaw in video software that had been tested more than 5 million times by its creators.

As a precaution, Anthropic has shared a version of Mythos with cybersecurity companies CrowdStrike

and Palo Alto Networks, as well as with Amazon, Apple and Microsoft in a project it dubbed "Glasswing." Networking giants Cisco and Broadcom are taking part in the project, along with the Linux Foundation that promotes free, open-source Linux computer operating system.

Approximately 40 organizations involved in the design, maintenance or operation of computer systems are said to have joined Glasswing.

Project partners are to share their Mythos findings, according to Anthropic, which is providing about \$100 million worth of computing resources for the mission. □



This photograph shows a figurine in front of the logo of the US artificial intelligence safety and research company Anthropic during a photo session in Paris on February 13, 2026.

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Relaxed McIlroy finds new challenges after Masters win

Augusta, United States

Putting on a green jacket has lifted an incredible weight off the shoulders of Rory McIlroy as the relaxed reigning Masters champion strolls around Augusta National.

The 36-year-old from Northern Ireland completed a career Grand Slam by capturing the green jacket last year to end a 10-year major win drought and years of chasing a Masters crown.

"It's so nice to walk around property or be out on the golf course and just not have that hanging over me," McIlroy said Tuesday. "It feels that it's a big weight off my shoulders."

World number two McIlroy tries to join Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo as the only back-to-back winners of the Masters with a victory this week.

Turns out the end of his slam



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland practices putting on the sixth hole during a practice round prior to the 2026 Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club on April 07, 2026 in Augusta, Georgia.

quest with a fifth career major title was only the beginning of a new story for McIlroy.

"I think the story as it relates to me is what do I do from now onwards? What motivates me? What gets me

going? What do I still want to achieve in the game?" McIlroy said.

"There's still a lot that I want to do. You think every time you achieve something or have success that you'll be

happy, but then the goalposts move, and they just keep nudging a little bit further and further out of reach.

"I think what I've realized is, if you can just really find enjoyment in the journey,

that's the big thing because honestly I felt like the career Grand Slam was my destination, and I got there, and then I realized it wasn't the destination."

Of all the majors, McIlroy says his best chances to win more titles will come at Augusta National.

"I feel like I'm still young, but I'm very experienced. I've been doing this for a long time. This is my 18th start," McIlroy said.

"I do feel like I've got another hopefully 10 good shots at this. Not that I don't at the other majors, but I just think that everything here is a little more predictable.

"I just think the more experience you have around this golf course, the better it is." This year, however, McIlroy has a new outlook. It's what helped him arrive on Saturday instead of Monday and relish in the perks of being a Masters winner. □

Magic upset Pistons, Spurs suffer Wembanyama score

Los Angeles, United States

The Orlando Magic kept up their bid for an automatic playoff berth with an 123-107 upset over the Eastern Conference-leading Detroit Pistons on Monday. Paolo Banchero scored 31 points and Desmond Bane added 25 as six Orlando players finished in double figures to overpower a Detroit side still missing the injured Cade Cunningham. Jalen Duren and Daniss Jenkins led the Detroit scoring with 18 points apiece, but the Pistons, who have already clinched the top seeding from the East, were shut down by the Orlando defense. "Everything with our team starts on the defensive end," Bane said. "When

we get stops, we get out in transition.

"The way we've been sharing the ball a lot of different guys contributing up and down the roster." Orlando's victory left them tied with the Charlotte Hornets and Philadelphia 76ers all three teams are on 43-36 with four games of the regular season remaining.

The Magic, Sixers and Hornets are all half a game behind the Toronto Raptors, who occupy the sixth and final automatic playoff berth in the Eastern Conference standings.

Philadelphia missed the chance to move level with the Raptors on Monday after suffering a 115-102 defeat on the road against the

San Antonio Spurs in Texas. Superstar Victor Wembanyama suffered an injury scare for San Antonio, leaving the game early in the second quarter to undergo treatment for what the team said was a left rib contusion.

The Frenchman, who is in the running for the NBA's Most Valuable Player award, checked back in to play a few more minutes at the end of the first half but sat out the second half.

"I think it would be a positive that he felt like he could come back and he played the last four or five minutes of the half," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said of Wembanyama.

The Sixers' Joel Embiid scored a game-high 34 points, but San Antonio bagged their 60th win of the campaign with another trademark all-round offensive effort that saw six players post double-digit points

totals.

Elsewhere, Jalen Brunson scored 30 points with 13 assists as the New York Knicks rallied to secure a wild 108-105 road win over the Atlanta Hawks. □



Victor Wembanyama #1 of the San Antonio Spurs grabs his left arm after an injury during game against the Philadelphia 76ers in the first half at Frost Bank Center on April 6, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas.

Sinner and Alcaraz start fast on Monte Carlo clay in race for No.1

Monte Carlo, Principality of Monaco

Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz continued their duel for the world number one ranking before the French Open as they opened their clay court seasons by crushing their opponents into the red Monte Carlo dirt on Tuesday.

With Usain Bolt in the crowd, the world's top two sprinted to second-round victories at the Masters event.

No. 2 Sinner took one hour and four minutes to dispatch Frenchman Ugo Humbert 6-3, 6-0. He was followed onto centre court by top-ranked Alcaraz, who took five minutes longer to beat Argentine Sebastian Baez 6-1, 6-3.

Sinner is chasing a first significant clay court



Italy's Jannik Sinner plays a forehand return to France's Ugo Humbert during the Monte Carlo ATP Masters Series Tournament round of 64 tennis match on Court Rainier III at the Monte-Carlo Country Club in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, south-eastern France on April 7, 2026.

the final in Barcelona. Sinner missed the start of the 2025 clay season as he finished a ban, but returned to reach the finals in Rome, where he fell to Alcaraz, and at Roland Garros, where he led the Spaniard by two sets and had three championship points before losing a five-set, five-hour marathon.

Ranking points are wiped out after a year, but as Sinner has none to lose in Monte Carlo, Alcaraz said the Italian's return to the top is inevitable.

"I'm going to lose the number one in the world," said Alcaraz after his win. "I don't know if it's going to be in this tournament or the next one."

"It is going to be really difficult to defend all the points and even if I do, Jannik is going to add some points in this tournament. Number one is not on my mind but to be my best on clay and let's see how the clay court season is going to be."

- 'I surprised myself' -

Sinner took a few games to find his rhythm against Frenchman Humbert, whom he had faced only twice, the last time five years ago, but broke serve in the fifth game before holding to love and taking a 4-2 lead. Humbert saved a double break point but eventually lost his serve again and the first set 6-3.

The second set was a one-way affair. The Italian did not concede a single game to the Frenchman, sweeping him aside 6-0 in 23 minutes. Sinner will face either Argentine Francisco Cerundolo or Czech Tomas Machac in the next round.

Alcaraz raced through the first set but stuttered in the second before winning the last seven points to surge to victory.

"A really good start to the tournament for me," he said "I surprised myself with the level.

I thought I was going to play a little bit worse."

He will next face either another Argentine, Tomas Etcheverry, or Frenchman Terence Atmane. □

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title and seeking to dethrone defending Monte Carlo champion Alcaraz as world number one, although the Spaniard said after his match that it was inevitable the 24-year-old Italian would take top spot in the next few weeks.

Sinner came into the season's first clay court event following his impressive "Sunshine Double" in March at the Indian Wells and Miami Masters 1000 tournaments, winning the two titles without dropping a set.

His victory on Tuesday ran his winning streak in 1000-level events to 18 matches.

"It was a good performance from my side," Sinner said, adding the first clay event "is never easy".

"You have to change your game style a little bit, how you approach certain situations," he said.

"I come here with good feelings but, at the same time, not many expectations." Alcaraz had no such reservations.

"It's been almost one year the last match I played on clay," he said. "To be honest, I missed it. I missed getting myself dirty a little bit."

Last season, Alcaraz entered four clay-court tournaments, winning three, including Monte Carlo, and losing